I CLAIM:

1. An image capture device for electro-optically reading indicia, comprising:

a) a housing bounding an interior and having a light-transmissive window;

b) an imaging module located within the interior of the housing and having an array of spaced-apart sensors for detecting incident light reflected from the indicia through the window over a field of view, and an internal light source for providing background illumination; and

c) external lighting mounted on an exterior of the housing for additionally illuminating the indicia with additional illumination to generate a broad, brightly illuminated area in which the indicia is imaged.

2. The device of claim 1, wherein the housing includes a keyboard and a display and constitutes a data collection terminal.

3. The device of claim 1, wherein the sensors are arranged in mutually orthogonal rows and columns and lie in a common plane.

4. The device of claim 1, wherein the internal light source is a light emitting diode.

5. The device of claim 1, wherein the module includes a focusing lens for focusing an image of the indicia onto the array.

6. The device of claim 1, wherein the external lighting includes a pair of external light sources flanking the window.

7. The device of claim 6, wherein each external light source is a light emitting diode.

8. The device of claim 1, and further comprising control means for detecting the ambient illumination, and for energizing the external lighting when the detected ambient illumination is below a threshold level.

9. A method of electro-optically reading indicia at low ambient illumination, comprising the steps of:

a) detecting light incident on an array of spaced-apart sensors located in a housing over a field of view;

b) providing background illumination by energizing an internal light source within the housing; and

c) additionally illuminating the indicia with additional illumination by energizing external lighting on the housing to generate a broad, brightly illuminated area in which the indicia is imaged.

10. The method of claim 9, and the step of detecting the ambient illumination level, and energizing the external lighting when the detected ambient illumination level is below a threshold value.